

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

BRIAN SCHWEITZER
GOVERNOR



JOHN BOHLINGER
LT. GOVERNOR

December 2007

Dear Educator:

The Office of the Governor and the Montana Board of Crime Control invite you and your students to participate in Montana's 1st Annual Do the Write Thing Challenge. This project provides young people a crucial voice to reduce youth violence through writing and literature. The Challenge encourages 7th and 8th grade students to participate in classroom discussions and write about the causes of and solutions to youth violence. In addition, National Finalists will have their writings published and placed in the Library of Congress. One boy and one girl from Montana will be selected to represent our State at the National Recognition Week in Washington, D. C. in July 19-23, 2008.

Teachers are encouraged to incorporate the Challenge into their regular classroom curriculum. Some ideas for classroom activities include:

- English: May be part of an essay or poetry-writing assignment
- Health: Discuss personal safety and well-being of others
- Civics: Conduct an exercise on personal and civic responsibility
- History: Use a historical perspective to examine youth violence

The deadline for entries is **March 7, 2008**. To participate, students complete a short essay, poem, play or song and submit it, along with a cover sheet, to their teachers and/or principals. Each school then forwards all written essays to the Montana Board of Crime Control Juvenile Justice Specialist to be judged by a panel of judges selected by Montana's Do the Write Thing committee, the coalition of business, community and governmental leaders that oversees and administers the Challenge in Montana. The top 25 essays from around the state will be forwarded to the Board, who then select the top 10 essays (5 boys and 5 girls). The top 10 writing finalists will be honored at a banquet held in Helena, MT in April, 2008. The top 10 writings will be bound and published. Montana's two national finalists, their teacher and a parent will go to Washington, D. C. to participate with other finalists during the National Recognition Week July 19-23, 2008. Travel expenses for all will be paid by the National Campaign to Stop Violence and a grant awarded by the Montana Board of Crime Control's Youth Justice Council.

Cover sheets and additional information may be found at: www.dtwt.org. An informational pamphlet with Montana specific contest information may be found at: <http://mbcc.mt.gov/>. To request a teacher's packet by mail, please contact Sheryl Burright, MBCC Juvenile Justice Specialist, at sburright@mt.gov or call 406.444.3651.

We encourage your student's participation and look forward to this year's Challenge.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Schweitzer", written over a horizontal line.

BRIAN SCHWEITZER
Governor